(b) Under a Scheme of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), assistance is provided for conversion of fishing trawlers into tuna long liners. So for, 225 such trawlers have been converted to tuna long liners under the scheme.

(c) There are 74 number of resource specific deep-sea fishing vessels of different categories belonging to'18 Companies/Firms which have been authorized to fish in the EEZ.

(d) Based on a report of a Working Group for revalidating the potential of fishery resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the maximum number of permissible vessels that could be allowed under each resource-specific category has been worked out. However, no year-wise targets are fixed for induction of deep-sea fishing vessels. Applications for LOPs are considered on merits.

Revised estimate for Jakhau Fishery Harbour Project

1515. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has accorded approval to Jakhau Fishery Harbour Project as 100 per cent Centrally sponsored scheme;

(b) whether the initial cost of the project has escalated due to delayed environment clearance by GO1 thereby raising the difference of amount to 2341.00 lakhs, which is yet to be paid to Gujarat Government by GOI;

(c) if so, the action taken by GOI so far, for the release of excess expenditure;

(d) whether Government of Gujarat has sent the detailed report regarding revised estimated cost; and

(e) if so, the time by when the revised cost will be released to Government of Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India had in May 1993 accorded approval for development of a fishing harbour at Jakhau in Kutch District of Gujarat at a cost of Rs.1143.60 lakh with 100% Central assistance due to its strategic location. Entire approved cost of Rs. 1143.60 lakh has been released to the State Government in six instalments for completion of the project.

(b) to (e) The Government of Gujarat could not complete the project within the approved cost of Rs. 1143.60 lakh and time period of three years. They submitted a Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) proposal initially with a cost escalation from Rs.1143.60 lakh to Rs.3319.34 lakh in February 2000. The project cost was subsequently again revised on several occasions by the State Government to (i) Rs.2925 lakh in October, 2000, (ii) Rs.2455 lakh in March, 2002, (iii) Rs.5291 lakh in May, 2005, (iv) Rs.3157 lakh in November, 2006 and (v) Rs.3483.90 lakh in March 2007. The Government of Gujarat reported that delay in obtaining environmental clearance is one of the reasons among others for the

cost escalation. After examination of the Revised Cost Estimate (RCE), the Government of Gujarat has been repeatedly requested to submit a complete, comprehensive and final RCE.

Relief to farmers under Debt Relief Scheme who had settled their dues

1516. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the status of debt relief to the farmers announced by the Union Government;

(b) for Kerala, debt relief were given during the months of January to March 2008, those who have taken loan from the Co-operative Banks and become over due and so, whether Government intended to give the benefits to the farmers who have already settled their dues during this period on One Time Settlement; and

(c) if not, what are the measures being taken to give relief to such farmers also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Research and Development in Agriculture

1517. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Agricultural Research and Development in the country as compared to other development Countries;

(b) the details of steps taken to accelerate the research and Development activities to increase productivity and quality of agricultural products in view of the growing population of the country;

(c) whether Government has signed any agreement with other countries for mutual co-operation in agricultural research; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) India has positioned herself well in as far as agricultural research and development is concerned. The agricultural research and development in the country has received a boost in the XIth Plan with an increased Plan Outlay of Rs. 12023 crores as compared to Rs.5368 crores during Xth Plan. Though India is spending only 0.34 percent of agricultural GDF in agricultural R&D as compared to 0.72 percent in sub-Sahara Africa and 0.40 percent in China, Indian agriculture research and development has excelled in various spheres of biotechnology and molecular biology research leading to enhanced agriculture production and productivity as is evident from the fact that India has achieved self-sustainence as far as food production is concerned.